

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 2/27/94
Romans 12:6-8 "Spiritual Gifts: Teaching & Faith"

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 12:1-11

Topical Study of Spiritual Gifts:

(following the order given in Romans 12; one speaking and one serving gift)

<u>Speaking Gifts</u>	<u>Serving Gifts</u>
Prophecy	Service
Teaching	Faith
Exhortation	Giving/Helps
Knowledge/Wisdom	Administration/Leadership
Evangelism	Mercy

Intro: Back in 1989, before we built the new building, we had a swarm of bees hanging on our Ed. Bldg. A thick mass of intimidating honey bees was literally hanging from the brick wall of our building, about three feet off of the ground! It's interesting--there's both tremendous potential for good, and tremendous potential for danger in a hive of bees. Well, there was no problem as long as the bees were not disturbed. They had a task to do, and they were devoting their energies to accomplishing that task. A hive of bees can produce a tasty supply of honey.

But we would have an uncontrollable danger on our hands if the hive was disrupted (by a child throwing a rock at the bees, etc). When bees become sidetracked from honey-making you'd better look out.

Key: Jesus Christ has given His Church a task to do. He commissioned us to be in the disciplemaking business. This task is my responsibility. And this task is your responsibility if you belong to Christ.

What's more, the Lord didn't leave us empty-handed. He has provided us with the resources necessary to accomplish this ministry. He has given us His Spirit, His Word, and His Gifts.

Last Week: Spiritual Gifts

The Gift of Prophecy: The gift of prophecy is intended to be used to spur the church into action. It does not primarily refer to prediction, but instead to the communication of God's revealed truth. Prophecy can be used in a public setting (preaching) or in a private setting (one on one).

The person with the gift of prophecy proclaims the Word of God with clarity, and applies it to a particular situation. This person has the ability to disturb the comfortable by announcing a particular message from God's Word. He/she may irritate the establishment. But the result of the use of the gift is that people are aroused to action.

The Gift of Service: All Christians are called to serve one another (Gal 5:13). Yet some are especially grace-gifted for service to the Body. They have the gift of service (or helps). We might call this gift the "gift of assistance." Christians with this

gift are helpers, people who labor behind the scenes. There is tremendous potential and opportunity for you if you have the gift of service.

Proposition: This evening, let's examine and apply God's instruction about two more spiritual gifts.

I. The Gift of Teaching (Romans 12:7)

Definition: Teaching is the ability to communicate the truths of the Word of God to someone else in a clear fashion.

II. The Gift of Faith (I Corinthians 12:9)

Definition: The gift of faith is the supernatural ability to trust God, and to encourage others to do the same.

I. The Gift of Teaching (Romans 12:7)

Read Romans 12:6-8

I must remind you that all Christians have spiritual gifts. And spiritual gifts enable us to minister. But we must never forget this. Spiritual gifts come from God. That fact rules out any reason for pride in the exercise of spiritual gifts. It also ought to motivate us to accept and gratefully use what God has given to us by His grace.

V 7 "...or he that teacheth, on teaching"

Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher. And when He ascended into heaven, He gave us His indwelling Spirit to teach us and "guide us into all truth" (Jn 16:13)." What's more, He gives certain individuals in the church teaching gifts in order to edify the rest of the church.

This raises some questions about the gift of teaching: What is it? How is it to be used? Do you have it? How can you know? Good questions!

First, we need to realize that there's a difference between the gift of teaching, mentioned here, and the gifted man, called a teacher in I Corinthians 12:28 ("And God hath set some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers. . ."). Teachers were recognized and appointed in the early church. They were given specific positions to teach. And God still appoints teachers, as is evident in the lives of great professors in seminaries and Christian colleges.

Yet you may have the gift of teaching, and never hold an official teaching position. You need not have a position to have a vital teaching ministry in this local church. So Paul exhorts in Romans 12:7, "he that teacheth, on teaching."

Definition: Teaching is the ability to communicate the truths of the Word of God to someone else in a clear fashion.

The greek word is "didaskalos." It carries the idea of systematic teaching or systemic training. In extra-biblical greek, the word was used to refer to a choir director who trained a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they were able to perform.

Teaching has to do with a systematic presentation of the Word of God. The goal is not to be innovative and novel. It's to make clear the revelation God has already given.

Acts 5:42 ". . . they ceased not to teach and preach Christ"

Colossians 1:28 ". . . teaching every man . . . perfect in Christ"
II Tim 2:2 "the things. . . commit. . .who shall be able to teach"

Application: Three disclaimers...

1. The gift of teaching is not the same as preaching, although preaching and teaching certainly go together, and often overlap. Proclaiming the gospel is one thing, but explaining it goes a step further.

The message of Christ needs to be explained as well as proclaimed. There must be explanation so that the Word is clearly understood. And application so that the relevance of the Word is grasped for daily living. Here's where teaching is vital.

Teaching takes place when a mature Christian sits down over lunch with a new Christian, and instructs him in the things of God. That's teaching.

When God gave the gift of teaching to the church, He highlighted the importance of learning. In a variety of settings: The gift of teaching can be used with men (one on one, one on one hundred). It can be used with women. It can be used by a lady with a group of children. It can be used by a mother with her son. It can be used by a husband to his wife. It can be exercised in a S.S. class, in a home, in a counseling situation, or in a discipling ministry.

2. Just because a person has the gift of teaching does not rule out the need for study and preparation. To the contrary! God holds those He has gifted with teaching gifts responsible to dig into His Word, to organize, to plan, and then to communicate His Word. And permit me to be very direct at this point. I think God is appalled by pastors and teachers who simply "wing it" when they communicate His Priceless Word!

Illust: How much time does it take to prepare to teach God's Word? Certainly it varies from person to person. But Sunday morning is not the time to start thinking about the Sunday School lesson! For me, I know I need to spend between 15-25 hours a week in preparation work in order to teach the Scriptures.

3. Just because a person is a school teacher does not mean they have the spiritual gift of teaching! We need to take the matter of spiritual gifts into account when we put people into ministries in WBC. God has equipped certain people in the church to do the various ministries He wants done. We simply need to match the person with the right gift with the right ministry.

Dr. Roy Zuck points out that there are only three reasons for poor teaching in the church: "If teachers are ineffective, either they do not have the teaching gift, are not developing it, or are not in fellowship with the Lord."

Challenge: We need to see ourselves as "stewards" of God's gifts. That'll transform the way we look at ministry. S.S. teachers, you don't just "fill a position." You are a steward of God. God has given you an important role in this church.

In the face of the anti-intellectual trend in many churches today, we need to be reminded of the importance of teaching the truth of the Word of God. Christianity

involves not only excitement, but instruction. As John R.W. Stott warns, "Experience without truth is the menace of a mindless Christianity."

Tragically some people prefer emotion over truth.

Illust:

Hebrews 5:12, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not solid food."

Perhaps God is saying to you, "I want you to be involved in a teaching ministry. I've gifted you with the gift of teaching."

Discuss: What are some ways the gift of teaching can be used at WBC?

There are many opportunities. The gift can be used in a ministry to disciple new converts. To lead small-group Bible studies. Bible teaching in rest homes.

Tran: The gift of teaching is a speaking gift. But as we've learned in I Peter 4:11, there's a second category of gifts--serving gifts. So let's take a look at a serving gift.

II. The Gift of Faith (I Corinthians 12:9)

READ I Corinthians 12:4-7

God loves diversity. We manufacture icecubes, but when God sends a snowstorm He makes each flake different! True, God's Church is like a mighty army, but that doesn't mean we should think of ourselves as look-alike soldiers. The Church is more like an orchestra. Each part makes its own unique contribution to the symphonic harmony. God establishes wonderful harmony by a lavish grant of highly diverse gifts. In an orchestra the woodwinds, the brass, and the percussion blend together to make beautiful music.

So it is in the ministry of the church. Each gifted person contributes a vital chord to the goal of the Church, the glory of God. There is harmony through diversity.

V 7--"But the manifestation (= open demonstration) of the Spirit is given to every man to profit."

Notice two very important considerations about spiritual gifts from verse 7:

1. Each believer has been given some special manifestation of the Spirit. The words "to every man" (one greek word) are in an emphatic position. Literally verse 7 reads, "To every man has been given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit."

Notice verse 11, "But all these (the various gifts) worketh that one and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

2. Spiritual Gifts are not for personal glory, but for the common good.

V 7--"To profit" (or "with a view to profiting").

Who benefits when you use your spiritual gift? The rest of the Church.

Vv 8-9--"For to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another, faith by the same Spirit."

In vv 8-9, Paul lists several gifts, 9 in fact. But don't think the list is exhaustive. None of the 4 lists in the NT are exhaustive (the order varies in all four passages). And what's more, the order of the gifts by no means indicates their importance.

Notice the gift of faith.

V 9--"To another, faith by the same Spirit"

All Christians possess saving faith. The Bible is clear that we are saved by God's grace through faith (Eph 2:8). We're told in Romans 1:16 that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." But saving faith is not the same as the gift of faith.

God has given certain individuals in the church the special ability to see what others cannot see, to endure what others cannot endure, and to trust God when there seems no natural reason to trust Him.

Definition: The gift of faith is the supernatural ability to trust God, and to encourage others to do the same. It involves an intensive ability to believe God, even in the face of enormous obstacles.

Key Passages:

Matthew 17:20 "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove."

I Corinthians 13:2 "And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains. . ."

Matthew 21:22 "And all things, whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

The gift of faith can lay hold of the promises of God. God says it. I believe it. That settles it.

Let's face it. Not all Christians have this type of faith. But God in His wisdom has given special individuals to the church who have the gift of faith. To them, no mountain is too tall for God. No problem is too great for God to handle. They have the supernatural ability to trust God, and to encourage the rest of us to trust God.

Those with the gift of faith are indispensable to the rest of the church. Do you know why? Because they continually remind us skeptics that God is in the business of doing the impossible! To them a helpless situation is not hopeless.

Let's consider some examples:

1. Paul in Acts 27--When in a vicious storm, here's what he said to the rest, Acts 27:22, 25 "I exhort you, be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life... for I BELIEVE God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

2. Hudson Taylor believed that God could win the Chinese people of his day. Without any money, without any support, and refusing to ask for a penny, he founded the China Inland Mission, and accomplished the greatest work in the history of that nation.

3. George Muller started several orphanages in England. Upon one now famous occasion, his orphanage was completely out of food. Yet Muller sat the

children down around the table, and prayed, "Father, thank you for the food we are about to receive." There was a knock at the door. The groceries were there!

Application of the Gift of Faith:

Do we need the gift of faith to be exercised today? Yes! Each day we face new challenges, from reaching lost people in this community, to starting new ministries. These challenges are overwhelming to many. But not to you who have the gift of faith.

To you, obstacles are merely opportunities for God to bring glory to Himself. And God wants you to be visionaries for the rest of us. Some people are paralyzed by those deadly words which plague so many churches, "We've never done it that way before." But those with the gift of faith are willing to break new ground, and go where we've never gone before.

Think of a train. Those of you with the gift of faith are like the engine. You have great confidence in God's power and ability to move us beyond the obstacles. The rest of us are the cars that follow. But if those with the gift of faith don't exercise their faith, guess what? The train doesn't move! The church stands still. If you have the gift of faith, use it. Spend time on you knees. Spend time believing God, and encourage others in the Body to do the same.

Conclusion:

A few years ago, we heard about the horrifying spectacle of soccer fans being crushed by a human stampede at an overcrowded stadium in Shedfield, England. The crowd got out of control. Tons of pressure crushed and killed 95 people. Gustave Le Bon, the French sociologist who authored the classic 1895 study "The Crowd", captured the scene in the rawest sense when he wrote, "Crowds are only powerful for destruction."

But the church is not a crowd. The church is a body.

There's also tremendous constructive power available in a mass of people. And God has designed His Church to tap into this power. He has distributed spiritual gifts to every Christian. And so, Every Christian is vital. But in the Church it's not "every man for himself", but "every man for Christ"!

If you know Christ, you've been gifted by Him for service. Are you willing to take God at His Word and serve Him?

Question: How do I discern my spiritual gift?

Answer: Three steps (adapted from Grace Chapel's booklet)

Directions for Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gift

1. CONSIDER YOUR INTERESTS.

What would you rather do for God than anything else in the world? God gives us certain desires and interests so we can use our gifts for Him.

2. TRY DIFFERENT GIFTS.

Look for opportunities in the church where you can employ a gift you suspect you have. Finding out what you don't have is very important in reducing the options.

3. TEST YOUR EFFECTIVENESS.

_____ Am I employing my gift successfully?

_____ Am I benefiting the body with my gift?

_____ Are others confirming my gift?

_____ Am I finding fulfillment and joy in exercising this gift?